

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL BELFAST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1130

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

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USNAVCOMMSTA LONDON DERRY

UNCLAS BELFAST 411

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, U.K. (N.I.)

SUBJECT: IRISH FOREIGN MINISTER MAKES MAJOR POLICY
SPEECH ON NORTH

REF: BELFAST 407

1. TWO NORTHERN IRELAND NEWSPAPERS AND IRISH TIMES OF DUBLIN CARRY REPORTS DEC. 17 OF SPEECH MADE BY IRISH FOREIGN MINISTER GARRET FITZGERALD AT FACULTY OF LAW UNIVERSITY OF LEIDEN DEC. 16. IRISH NEWS (CATHOLIC) DEVOTES MOST SPACE FRONT PAGE TO TEXT AND IRISH TIMES ADDS LEAD EDITORIAL. BELFAST NEWS LETTER (PROTESTANT) HAS FRONT PAGE STORY UNDER HEADLINE "PLAN BACKS HOME RULE." PRESS REACTION FAVORABLE.

2. MAIN POINTS FROM NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS FOLLOW:
(A) SOLUTION MUST BE FOUND WITHIN IRELAND AND PRIMARILY AT THIS STAGE, WITHIN NORTHERN IRELAND CONTEXT, (B) ANY SOLUTION MUST PROVIDE NORTHERN IRELAND ONCE AGAIN WITH ITS OWN DEVOLVED PARLIAMENT, (C) WHATEVER CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS MADE MUST, IF THEY ARE TO GAIN NECESSARY
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MINIMUM OF CONSENT TO MAKE DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT WORK,

BE SUCH AS TO ENSURE PRESENCE IN GOVERNMENT OF PARTIES THAT ARE VALID AND AUTHENTIC REPRESENTATIVES OF BOTH SECTIONS, (D) THIS (ARRANGEMENT) MUST ENDURE UNTIL SUCH TIME AS OLD POLITICAL DIVISIONS BETWEEN UNIONISTS AND NATIONALISTS, PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC CRUMBLE INTO IRRELEVANCE AND ARE REPLACED BY A NATURAL DIVISION ON ISSUES OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICY, (E) UNIONIST POPULATION UNDERGOING PROFOUND IDENTITY CRISIS AND ALTHOUGH SOME DID NOT ACCEPT THEIR OWN IRISHNESS, THEY BELONGED IN ISLAND OF IRELAND AND NOWHERE ELSE. THIS DID NOT MEAN THEY NOW WILLING TO ACCEPT PARTICIPATION IN A SINGLE IRISH STATE WITHIN WHICH THEY WOULD FEEL THEMSELVES OUTNUMBERED BY NATIONAL IRISH OF NORTH AND SOUTH. IT DID MEAN THAT THEIR FATE LAY IN ISLAND OF IRELAND WITHIN WHICH ANY POLITICAL SOLUTION, SHORT TERM OR LONG TERM MUST ACCOMODATE THEM, (F) ANY SOLUTION MUST BE REJECTED IF IT SEEKS TO PLAY AROUND WITH THE BOUNDARY, THERE ARE 200,000 NATIONALISTS IN EAST ULSTER, 60 PER CENT OF THEM IN BELFAST MANY MILES INSIDE THE PART OF NORTHERN IRELAND WHICH ANY REDRAWN BOUNDARY WOULD ENCLOSE, (G) POPULATION EXCHANGE INVOLVING HALF-MILLION PEOPLE UNACCEPTABLE AS IS ANACHROMISM OF CONFESSIONAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES ON CANTONAL LINES, (H) SOLUTION MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT IMMENSE COMMON INTERESTS ENJOYED BY NORTH AND SOUTH ESPECIALLY WITHIN EUROPEAN COMMUNITY WHERE SIMILAR INTERESTS ON REGIONAL AND AGRICULTURAL POLICIES DIVERGED FROM THOSE OF BRITAIN, (I) IRA AND ORGANIZATIONS ON UNIONIST SIDE WERE THREAT TO BOTH PARTS OF IRELAND AND COULD BEST BE OVERCOME BY CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH, (J) ANY SOLUTION MUST OFFER REASSURANCE NECESSARY TO APPEASE DEEP-SEATED FEARS OF BOTH SECTIONS COMMUNITY NORTHERN IRELAND. NATIONALISTS MUST BE SATISFIED THAT DISCRIMINATION AND REPRESSION WOULD NOT RETURN AND THAT THE FORCES OF LAW AND ORDER WOULD APPLY EVEN-HANDED JUSTICE. UNIONISTS MUST BE SATISFIED THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE PUSHED OR PULLED INTO A UNITED IRELAND AGAINST THEIR WILL AND THAT THEY WOULD NOT CONTINUE TO BE SUBJECT TO THE KIND OF CAMPAIGN WAGED BY THE IRA IN RECENT YEARS, (K) IT IS WITHIN THESE PARAMETERS THAT A SOLUTION TO NORTHERN IRELAND PROBLEM HAS TO BE FOUND. IT WILL NOT BE FOUND EASILY OR QUICKLY, IT WILL NOT BE UNCLASSIFIED

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FOUND WITHOUT IMMENSE PATIENCE.

3. TEXT NOT AVAILABLE HERE. BUT FROM NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS FITZGERALD WHILE CALLING FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF BORDER REGIONS BY COOPERATIVE ACTION "BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE TWO PARTS OF THE COUNTRY" DID NOT MENTION ANY INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK.

4. CONGEN VIEWS SPEECH AS MOST TIMELY AND HELPFUL.
WITHOUT PREDICTING REACTIONS FIANNA FAIL, IAN PAISLEY OR
PADDY DEVLIN IT DIFFICULT DISCERN HOW RATIONAL ATTACK CAN
BE MADE ON OVERALL REALISTIC AND THOUGHTFUL ANALYSIS.
SPEECH ALSO DEMONSTRATES THAT "SOUTHERN IGNORANCE OF
NORTHERN REALITIES" DOES NOT EXTEND TO FITZGERALD. IN
MANY WAYS, EXCEPT ON POWER-SHARING, SECSTATE REES (REFTEL)
AND IRISH FOREIGN MINISTER SEEM TO BE SAYING THE SAME THINGS.

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